



***United States Attorney  
Southern District of New York***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
JANUARY 13, 2004**

**CONTACT: U.S. ATTORNEY'S OFFICE  
MARVIN SMILON, HERBERT HADAD,  
MICHAEL KULSTAD  
PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE  
(212) 637-2600**

**GENOVESE CRIME FAMILY FIGURE PLEADS GUILTY TO RACKETEERING,  
2 ATTEMPTED MURDERS IN MANHATTAN FEDERAL COURT**

DAVID N. KELLEY, the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York, announced that MICHAEL ZANFARDINO, a/k/a "Hippy," pled guilty today in Manhattan federal court before United States District Judge GEORGE B. DANIELS to racketeering crimes committed in furtherance of the Genovese Organized Crime Family of La Cosa Nostra, including two attempted murders in the Morris Park Section of the Bronx, New York.

A three-count Information filed today in Manhattan federal court charges ZANFARDINO, 35, with participating in the affairs of the Genovese Family racketeering enterprise through a pattern of racketeering activity, in violation of the RICO statute. In pleading guilty, ZANFARDINO admitted to five separate acts of racketeering activity, including: (i) the 1995 attempted murder of Darin Mazzearella; (ii) the 1990 attempted murder of Armond Dragone; (iii) the 1998 conspiracy to extort a nightclub on Commerce Avenue in the Bronx; (iv) the 2000 conspiracy to extort a nightclub on Dean Avenue in the Bronx; and

(v) the conspiracy, from March 2001 to April 2003, to extort Circle Rubbish Removal, Inc., a New Jersey-based waste-disposal business that is the exclusive provider of garbage-hauling and street-sweeping services at the Hunts Point Terminal Market in the Bronx, New York. In addition, ZANFARDINO pled guilty to using and carrying a firearm in connection with the Commerce Avenue extortion.

In pleading guilty to the attempted-murder charges, ZANFARDINO admitted to shooting Mazzairella and Dragone, on June 20, 1995, and April 7, 1990, respectively, with the intent to kill each of them. ZANFARDINO's shooting of Mazzairella has been the subject matter of two jury trials in Manhattan federal court in recent years. According to the evidence in those trials, ZANFARDINO shot Mazzairella nine times at point-blank range as a result of a dispute between two rival factions of organized crime - on the one side, ZANFARDINO and an associate affiliated with the Genovese Crime Family, and on the other side, Mazzairella and his associates, all of whom were members of the "Tanglewood Boys," a gang affiliated with the Luchese Organized Crime Family. Hours after the shooting, one of Mazzairella's close associates, John Petrucelli, stabbed and killed a 17-year-old named Paul Cicero in retaliation for ZANFARDINO's shooting of Mazzairella, the evidence at the recent trials showed.

At one of those trials, before United States District Judge THOMAS P. GRIESA in 2002, Petrucelli was convicted of murdering Cicero in furtherance of the Tanglewood Boys. Mazzarella, who in 1997 became a Government cooperating witness and testified against Petrucelli at the trial, was also a member of the Tanglewood Boys. Petrucelli was sentenced on February 7, 2003, to life in prison for the Cicero murder.

At the other trial, before United States District Judge PETER K. LEISURE in 2001, a witness who testified before the Grand Jury that was investigating the Cicero murder was convicted of perjury in connection with his false testimony. The witness, Clark Schwieger, was sentenced to 5 years' imprisonment.

Sentencing in ZANFARDINO's case was scheduled for April 27, 2004, at 9:45 A.M. before Judge DANIELS. ZANFARDINO faces a maximum sentence of life in prison.

ZANFARDINO, a resident of Queens, New York, has been in custody since his arrest on April 3, 2003.

Mr. KELLEY praised the efforts of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the New York City Police Department in this case. In addition, Mr. KELLEY thanked the Westchester County District Attorney's Office and the Bronx County District Attorney's Office for their assistance during the investigation.

Mr. KELLEY also expressed gratitude to the New York City Business Integrity Commission for its investigative help in this matter.

Assistant United States Attorney DAVID RASKIN is in charge of the prosecution.

04-07

###